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Guest Editorial with the Grand Chief

AFN Annual Assembly

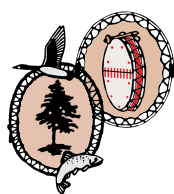
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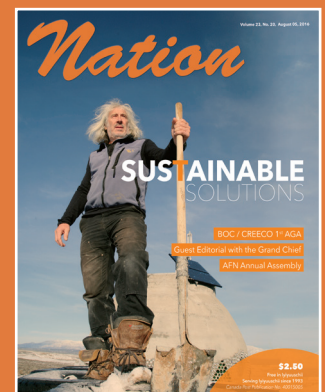


Photo by  
Kirsten Jacobsen





# Reconciliation requires repudiation of an unjust past



Guest editorial by Grand Chief Matthew Coon Come

In April, NDP MP Romeo Saganash introduced Bill C-262 in the House of Commons. The private member's bill calls for a legislative framework for full and comprehensive implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). It highlights the importance of harmonizing federal laws and creating national action plans, consistent with the UN Declaration.

Bill C-262 provides the opportunity to review all the unjust laws and policies that have historically served to keep our Peoples in a state of poverty and dependency, most notably, the Indian Act. The UN Declaration lays out a path to redress the historic injustices suffered by Indigenous Peoples.

If implemented properly, the Declaration can lay the foundation for the elimination of poverty, land and resource dispossession, and the kinds of intolerable living conditions that produce epidemic suicides among our youth. This is an opportunity to rescind all unjust laws and policies that are inconsistent with the UN Declaration. This is how true reconciliation will begin in Canada.

Last December, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) issued its Final Report. It included some 94 "Calls to Action" – measures that would be required to bring about genuine reconciliation between Indigenous Peoples and Canadian society. Among the most important was a call to adopt the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as "the framework for reconciliation."

In fact, the TRC included the Declaration in 16 of its Calls to Action. Prime Minister Trudeau agreed to implement all of them and repeatedly declared his support for the UN Declaration. This past May, Indigenous Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett also made unqualified statements at the UN's Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in favour of the Declaration.

However, in an address to the Assembly of First Nations July 12, Justice Minister Jody Wilson-Raybould suggested that "simplistic approaches, such as adopting the UNDRIP as being Canadian law are unworkable." The UN

Declaration as a whole was demeaned publicly in the media as "unworkable," even if that was not the intent.

However, it is the unjust laws and policies that have been in place for far too long that are unworkable. They have produced Third World conditions in too many Indigenous communities across Canada.

We have not put forward a position that legislation should have the intent or effect of immediately codifying the entire UN Declaration as part of Canadian law. Nor does Bill C-262 take such an approach. In my view, principled implementation of the UN Declaration would involve responsibilities on the part of both the federal government and Indigenous Peoples. Both have their own distinct roles.

By endorsing Bill C-262, we fully support the call for a collaborative process between Indigenous Peoples and the federal government. The Bill repudiates doctrines of superiority. It also rejects colonialism in favour of a contemporary approach based on good faith and on principles of justice, democracy, equality, non-discrimination, good governance and respect for human rights. These are all critical elements in achieving lasting reconciliation.

Since her address to the AFN, the Justice Minister has clarified her position with respect to the UN Declaration. She has stated that for her government the question is not if the UN Declaration will be implemented, but how.

However, a legislative framework for implementing the UN Declaration is the best way forward. It will contribute to ensuring that any future government will not easily reverse progress made. As the Minister herself stated to the House of Commons April 12: "We need to develop a national reconciliation framework in partnership with indigenous communities. That reconciliation framework needs to survive the life of one government."

By building on such common perspectives, we can fully and effectively implement the UN Declaration in a way that will be positive and "workable" for the benefit of present and future generations of our Peoples.



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# Sharing the bounty

## Goldcorp donation to cultural institute invests in the past and the future

by Will Nicholls

It's not often that a mining company gives more than it's required to the people whose traditional territory is being exploited. Goldcorp, owners of the Eleonore mine near Oujé-Bougoumou, are trying to change that image with a \$250,000 donation to the Eenou-Eeyou Community Foundation (EECF).

The EECF's mandate is to oversee the "Securing the Future" fundraising campaign for Aanischaaukamikw, the Cree Cultural Institute. The donation was made during a ceremony at the institute in Oujé July 19.

"The day will forever stand out for me as a symbol of what can be possible when people are focused on building a positive relationship," said Goldcorp Executive Vice President Brent Bergeron. He said Goldcorp's gift was to assist in the "Creeps' effort to preserve, study and share their culture, language and history."

Grand Chief Matthew Coon Come thanked Goldcorp for the contribution, saying "it opens the eyes to the richness of Cree culture, history and language."

Coon Come stressed the tradition of sharing. "Because when you live on the land you learn the importance of sharing," he said. "When you hunt and fish you learn to share your labour, to share your resources and to share your knowledge. Goldcorp today has clearly demonstrated that it understands this lesson."

The partnership is about more than jobs, contracts or royalties, added the Grand Chief. "Gone is the day when resource companies could take from the land without thoughts for the rights of others, without the thought for future generations. By investing philanthropically to advance Cree cultural development, Goldcorp demonstrates good faith, generosity and if I may say, they have demonstrated that crucial Cree value of sharing."

Oujé-Bougoumou Chief Curtis Bosum brought a local and personal note to the event, talking about how difficult it was to make his community a reality less than 30 years ago.

"We have built a village which is a creative blend of our ancient culture and contemporary technology," said

Bosum. "We have chosen and adapted those elements of the larger society which are compatible with our Cree culture and created something new, something different and something beautiful. Our village is a declaration that we are true to our ancient culture and, at the same time, that we are open to the world."

Bosum said this is part of what Aanischaaukamikw is all about and he is proud to host a facility that plays such an important role in the Cree Nation.

Eenou-Eeyou Foundation President Abel Bosum said the funds would be used to ensure Aanischaaukamikw continues to benefit the Cree and "to share our culture with the world."

That role is more important than ever. A recent report noted that possibly only four Aboriginal languages would survive into the future – one of them being the language spoken by the James Bay Cree. The survival and continued support for Aanischaaukamikw will ensure that the Cree way of life will also survive.

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# Help the Eagles **soar again**

## James Bay Eagles forced to suspend football program

by Dan Coyle

**F**or almost a decade, the James Bay Eagles have played a central role in the summer sports scene for youngsters across Eeyou Istchee.

Led by Trevor Monaghan, a former football player with the University of Ottawa Gee Gees and current manager of the Chisasibi Fitness Center, the Eagles football program has helped countless budding Cree athletes, who have successfully represented their communities at a number of 6-A-Side football tournaments across Canada.

The Eagles were the subject of an “8th Fire Dispatches” documentary in 2011 that followed the team that summer as it participated in a national 6-A-Side Football tournament in Prince Edward Island.

But the gridiron has fallen silent this summer, as much needed funding for the program has dried up, leaving the future of the James Bay Eagles in doubt.

“It’s tough,” said Monaghan told the Nation. “There is so much emphasis on hockey and broomball in the Cree nation, but the value of football should not be overlooked.”

Monaghan is spending his summer developing elite Cree athletes as part of the Chisasibi Fitness Center’s Elite

Strength and Conditioning Program. He knows the resources it takes to field a properly equipped team.

“It takes thousands of dollars to equip the kids with gear, and to finance trips to the nation’s leading football tournaments, that have provided players with incredible experiences over the years,” he said.

To help get the ball in the air again, the team has started an online fundraising drive with a target of \$50,000. To donate, visit [www.gofundme.com/https-youtu-be-j](http://www.gofundme.com/https-youtu-be-j) or visit the James Bay Eagles Football Facebook group for details.

Alex MacDonald, a member of the squad that traveled to PEI, captained the Eagles until graduating from the program following the 2014 season. He laments the current suspension of the football program.

“We were dominating – an elite program,” MacDonald recalled. “I felt like a pro being on those road trips. We had nice jerseys, good food, nice places to stay, and it gave me a feeling of importance.”

MacDonald was part of the first wave of young Cree players who

founded the James Bay Eagles, and spearheaded fundraising activities to support the program.


However, he is concerned by the lack of fundraising among the next generation of potential Eagles stars. “There is more to sports than hockey. They may find they really like it and they should put their heart and soul in it.”

MacDonald also believes that up-and-coming Cree football players underestimate how far the Eagles program can take them. “A lot of young kids don’t realize the potential we have because we don’t play many teams,” he insisted. “We have always been one of the teams to beat, and dominated when we played teams down south, winning tournaments against some of the best teams in Canada.”

He remains confident that we have not seen the last of the James Bay Eagles.

“I really do feel it will continue, because I think there is a lot of good talent in the community,” concluded MacDonald. “It is our only football team, and that has always given me a great sense of pride.”

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In Brief

Photo provided by Tatiana Philip



## Chisasibi pool welcomes disabled swimmers

The Cree Nation of Chisasibi inaugurated the community's recently upgraded swimming centre July 21. A year-long project initiated by Chisasibi Swimming Pool Centre Aquatic Coordinator Kendal Foisy and Cree Board of Health and Social Services James Bay (CBHSSJB) occupational therapist Virginie Lubino, the pool is now readily accessible to those with limited mobility and special needs.

"Whether I'm big or I'm in pain, whether I use a cane or a wheelchair, I can now go swimming safely in Chisasibi," said Lubino.

The new equipment includes a pool lift and accessible stairs that are easily installed. They allow swimmers to safely enter and exit the water. Next up are renovations to changing rooms that will further improve the accessibility of the swimming centre.

"This is the result of a close collaboration between the Cree Nation of Chisasibi and the CBHSSJB," noted Lubino. "Kendal [Foisy] did everything to make this happen. She and her staff worked hard to safely install the equipment and follow our recommendations."

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Fishing derby  
organiser Derek  
Matabie with pike  
winner, Walter  
Capassisit



## Esther Simard turns heads in tumpline portage

Tumpline portage began as a competition of strength amongst the Cree. People sought to prove who could handle the most weight as families moved from place to place throughout the James Bay region to their various camps. To this day tumpline portage competitions put First Nations and other inhabitants of the area to the test, seeing how far contestants can carry sacks of sand weighing as much as 800 pounds. One competitor, Esther Simard, has been proving that Cree women are up to the task.

"I used to be an athlete when I was younger, I enjoyed sports a lot," Simard told the Nation. "After going through a rough time in my life and

putting on some weight I thought I wouldn't find a sport that I could enjoy."

But thanks to encouragement from friends Daisy Shecapio and Louise Wapachee, Simard tried out the sport in 2011, she said. "They chipped in to pay my entry fee in Mashteuiatsh because they believed in me."

In a recent contest, Matthew Coonishish managed to carry 800 pounds the full 30 metres and drop it on the tailgate of a pick-up truck. Simard carried her 600 pounds a little bit further, dropping it on the left side of the truck just before the driver's side door.

"I can say I finally found a sport that I enjoy doing at my current weight," related Simard. "I would like to see other Cree women from the Cree Nation be part of the heavy weight portage competitions and show their strength."

## Oujé Fishing Derby

Oujé-Bougoumou hosted its walleye fishing derby July 22-24 on Lake Opemiska. For three days crews took to the water seeking walleye and pike and competed for a \$25,000 first place prize in combined walleye weight. Prizes included new fishing gear, a Helix 7 GPS and a generator, while the winner of the door prize draw went home with a brand new Lund fishing boat.

The top three on the walleye scoreboard were Didier Germain, Miguel Taillieur and Jonathan Otter with combined weight/length totals of 87.72, 84.58 and 83.85, respectively. Rounding out the top 10 were Eric Gagnon, Brigitte Rosa, Claude Cooper, Roger Toussaint, Stephane Forgues, Daniel Heinz and Charles Thibodeau.

Walter Capassisit snagged first place in the pike category, weighing in at 18.77 pounds and adding \$5000 to his wallet. Daniel Bosum, Paulina Cooper, Joey Blacksmith, Jesse Thivierge, Renee D. Bosum, Valerie Belanger, Didier Germain, Mary Jane Brazeau and Isabelle Jolly closed out the top 10.

## Remembering Joseph Hardy Audate

Emmanuel Audate, Daffny Bah-Audate, our family and I would like to thank everyone for the sympathy and kindness extended to us during this very stressful and difficult time of the death of our beloved Joseph Hardy Audate. It is a great comfort to know that you are thinking of us as we grieve our beloved husband, father, grandfather, brother and friend.

We appreciate your time and the sacrifices for those who have travelled so far, especially the Cree School Board, the Cree community members, to attend the funeral.

Hardy was a loving husband, an amazing father and quite simply someone who you could count on to light up your day. Knowing that he has touched so many lives will help us accept his death.

Thank you all so much for the comforting words, the beautiful flowers and the generous gifts, and most of all, thank you for your friendship with Hardy.

Aissatou Bah-Audate





# opening the door

CreeCo and Board of Compensation  
hold their **first-ever AGA in Chisasibi**

by Will Nicholls

Photos by Will Nicholls & Gaston Cooper





**W**hether it's a kiss, a goose – or, in this case, an Annual General Assembly – everyone remembers their first.

That was certainly the case for CreeCo President and Board of Compensation Chair Jack Blacksmith, who had just presided over the first AGA for the two organizations July 13-14 in Chisasibi.

“It’s all about transparency and really letting our people know about the BOC and Cree companies. There’s a lot of knowledge to be shared, issues to be addressed and it was time for it to happen. We needed this and the Cree people needed this,” said Blacksmith.

In fact, Grand Chief Matthew Coon Come is encouraging other large Cree entities to host their own annual general assemblies. The limited time at the Grand Council/Cree Nation Government’s yearly AGA doesn’t allow the people to have a full understanding of the entities and the part they play in the Cree world.

At this event, CreeCo showcased the Cree Construction and Development Company (CCDC), which is celebrating 40 years of doing business. Since 1976, the 100% Cree-owned company has proven to be a valuable asset for CreeCo and the Board of Compensation.

Company President Robert Baribeau said the CCDC is now one of the largest Aboriginal construction firms in Canada. It’s also the first Aboriginal entity to obtain ISO Certification in Canada, which ensures company services are safe, reliable and of good quality. The standards also help businesses increase productivity while minimizing errors and waste.

CCDC’s first contracts were from Hydro-Quebec, clearing the route for power lines that would deliver electricity to southern Quebec and the United States. Since then they have taken on more serious jobs involving the construction of dams and civil engineering work for



“There’s a lot of knowledge to be shared, issues to be addressed and it was time for it to happen. **We needed this and the Cree people needed this.**”

- BOC Chair and CreeCo President Jack Blacksmith.





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Hydro-Québec and its subsidiary, Société d'énergie de la Baie James (SEBJ).

Closer to home, the company has built schools, medical clinics, air terminals and justice facilities in the communities. Last year, the CCDC had revenues of \$53 million. The company employs between 400 and 850 people each year depending on the type and number of contracts they receive, including 300-350 Aboriginal people.

In the past 13 years more than \$120 million have gone into First Nations employees' pockets. Likewise, Cree and other First Nation suppliers received \$90 million for supplying construction material, equipment rental, and as subcontractors.

Partnerships with First Nations also matter to CCDC. In the past five years, they have been partners with the Cree Nations of Chisasibi, Wemindji, Nemaska, Mistissini and Eastmain. One such partnership is Eeyou Istchee Construction Products, owned equally by Chisasibi, Nemaska, Wemindji and CCDC. They produce around 500,000 tons of crushed stone per year.

Single community partnerships show long-term results, ranging from \$24 million with Mistissini's Makahikan since 2009 up to the \$255 million in projects resulting from CCDC's partnership with Nemaska Eénou Company since 1990.

Baribeau said this was important because profits were shared while contributing to community development. "The benefits stay in Eeyou Istchee as a result," he said.

While CCDC can say they helped to build the Cree Nation, they can also say they are helping to clean it up. Part of the partnership with Chisasibi involves clearing a contaminated site left over from the 1970s. Hydro-Québec simply buried massive fuel tanks near the airport during the building of the La Grande hydroelectric project, which later began leaking into the river. The excavation work started this year, with the goal to finish the project by 2020 at the latest.

Deputy Chief Daisy House Lameboy said she found the AGA informative. "The information they are giving is for all levels, for those who are experienced in the field of finance and business and those who are learning, whether they are considering a board position or starting their own business," she said.

The BOC and CreeCo felt they had done a good job for their first-ever AGA. "As leaders of all entities it is our responsibility to provide information to our people. As Chairman of the BOC and President of CreeCo, I welcome the idea of gathering people in an assembly to provide as much information to our people as possible. They are the shareholders. I was proud to let the people know and understand how we benefit the Cree Nation as whole," said Blacksmith.

## Partnerships and local **benefits**



Baribeau said the CCDC's mandate is to maximize Cree interests in all projects. "As much as possible the CCDC hires locally and provides training for Cree workers," he noted. "We subcontract to Cree suppliers and companies when they are competitive. We also use local companies and subcontractors that are competitive."

Some local Cree companies have complained that CCDC unfairly competes with them or doesn't subcontract them work. But Baribeau says competition is good for the Cree communities as lower costs mean more can be done. "We will continue to generate profits and opportunities that will benefit the entire Cree Nation," he said.

## Gestion **ADC**

Geston ADC, a subsidiary of CCDC, is celebrating their 20th anniversary. Started in 1996, they specialize in remote work-camp logistics, catering and janitorial services. ADC's clients include mines, construction sites, Hydro-Québec sites and institutions.

During the EM-1 hydro project, they supplied catering and janitorial services, ran the bars, cafeteria and convenience store for the Nemiscau camp as well as catering and janitorial services for the EM-1 and Rupert River Diversion camps. It's part of their long history with Hydro-Québec where they have served the LA Grande hydro sites since 1996. Two of the best-known mining sites

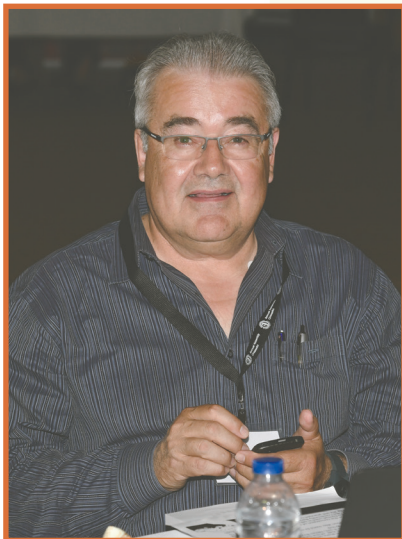
run by Goldcorp and Stornoway Diamond also use ADC's services.

In 2008, Profit Magazine recognized ADC as one of Canada's fastest-growing companies. The company employs 350 people, and had revenues of \$59 million over the past two years. With \$16.6 million in salaries for Cree employees during the same period, the company is a major economic force in Eeyou Istchee.

Billy Diamond once remarked that the land would take care of about 33% of the Cree workforce with another 33% working for local bands and businesses. He worried about the remaining third. CCDC and ADC are helping to fill that gap.



## **First Nations Bank**



Back in 1996, First Nations communities in Saskatchewan and the Toronto-Dominion Bank joined forces to create the First Nations Bank. Its focus is on commercial customers, including Aboriginal businesses, Aboriginal governments and organizations, and non-Aboriginal businesses serving Aboriginal markets.

The Board of Compensation and James Bay Eeyou supported the project and today they own 16.64% of the common equity - making them the fourth largest shareholder. To date only two communities in Eeyou Istchee, Chisasibi and Nemaska,

have local FNB branches. Whapmagoostui will be added this year.

CNG Executive Director Bill Namagoose is currently the non-executive Chair of the Board of the FNB, which now has assets of \$441 million. FNB believes the path to continued growth is in markets with a significant Aboriginal presence. They also target fiscally healthy First Nations communities, look for commercial development opportunities and are looking to expand into other James Bay Cree communities.



# Cree Collective Deductible Insurance Program

Before the fund was created, Cree communities paid an exorbitant amount of money to insure infrastructure like band houses and facilities. In 1992, the CMCH in partnership with the BOC managed to bring costs down from \$450,000 a year for infrastructure, and to \$250,000 for band housing.

The CMHC agreed to give the savings to the BOC in order to create a self-insurance fund. It has expanded to include other

band assets and their subsidiaries as well as CreeCo. Today over 60 Cree entities with assets of over \$2.3 billion are covered under the program. The past 12 years have seen \$30 million paid out in claims.

The program is looking to expand into private commercial insurance, private home insurance, private automobile insurance (including ATVs and snowmobiles), and private tenant insurance.



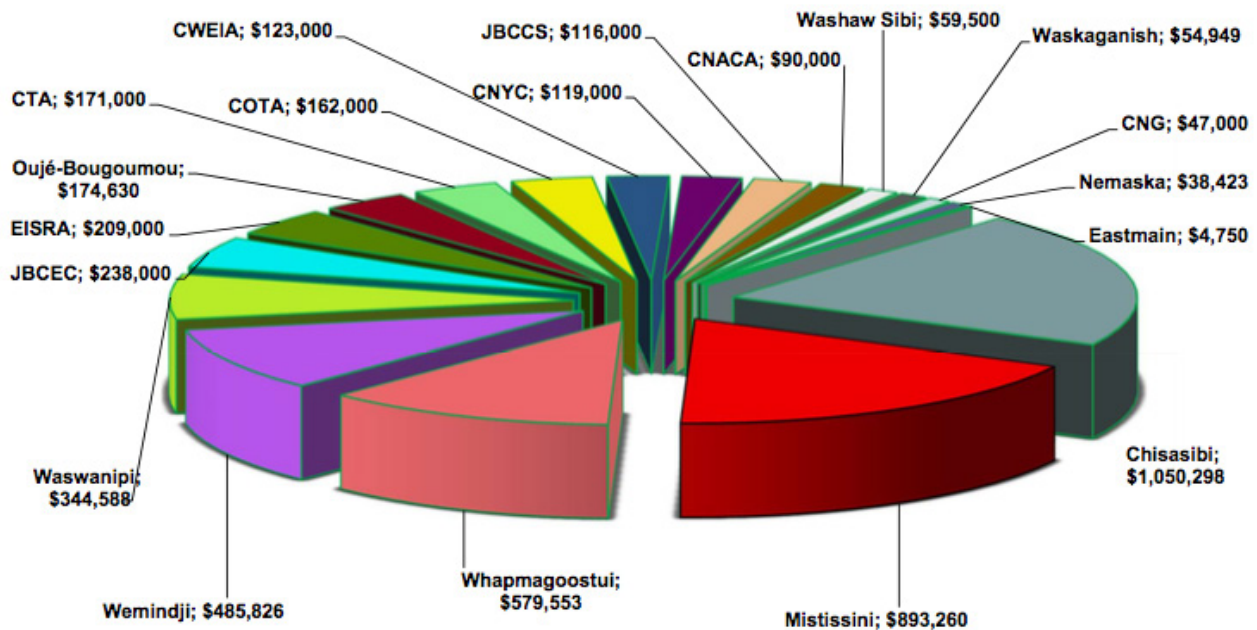
## Valpiro

Valpiro operates airport services, including aircraft fuelling, ground services and office space rental. Set up in 1971, the company was bought by CreeCo in 1989 and services Air Creebec, Sunwing, Air Inuit, Air Canada and Jazz airlines. They handle the cargo and baggage, de-icing or anti-icing and other needed services. In 2015, Air Canada Jazz said Valpiro was the Best Performing Ground Handler of all the destinations they fly to in Canada.

## Eeyou Eenou Realty Properties

This company is the real estate arm that owns three buildings in Montreal - the CCDC building in Laval and two others on Duke Street downtown. A project to remove the Bonaventure expressway and turn it into a boulevard will greatly increase the value of the last two properties, noted Blacksmith.

## GRANTS DISBURSED IN 2015-2016



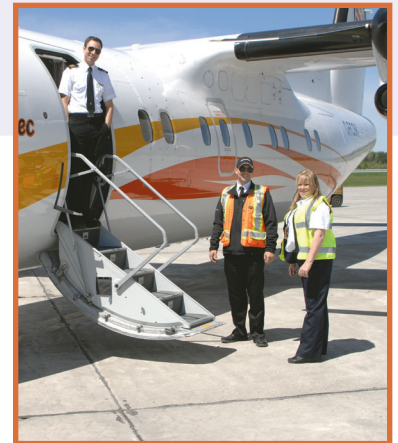


## Air Creebec

In the 1970s, air travel left a lot to be desired in Eeyou Istchee, which prompted CreeCo to partner with Austin Airway in 1980 to create Air Creebec. It was a short relationship as the Cree brought out their partners two years later. Air Creebec began with a single twin-engine Otter in 1987 but now operates 21 planes.

Ontario saw the first all-Cree crew in 1992. It would be another seven years before Air Creebec did the same in Eeyou Istchee. Air Creebec topped \$1 billion in revenues in 2013. With new schedules and recent medevac agreements, that figure is much higher now.

Air Creebec had some people questioning the price of tickets. President Matthew Happyjack said it was tied to the price of fuel, airport fees and services, maintenance and other associated costs. This company is one of the jewels of the CreeCo portfolio.



## QUALITY INN & SUITES



## Quality Inn & Suites Val-d'Or

A partnership between CreeCo and Trahan Holding, this is a franchise that has done quite well. This year has seen Choice Hotels give them a Platinum Award and TripAdvisor has handed them a certificate of Excellence.

## CreeCo Dumas Mining Inc.

Perhaps the least known of the CreeCo subsidiaries, Dumas deals with mining and energy services. CreeCo got on board in 2012 to look at regional, national and international opportunities.

Dumas is involved in mine development, construction, operation and services. Their mandate is to be involved from concept to completion in a mining project. They offer services ranging from shaft sinking and tunneling, construction and engineering services, surface and underground mining, transportation and catering and custodial services. They can access training funds and applications and economic and skills capacity building when partnering with mining companies, First Nations and government.

They even offer cross-cultural training and knowledge transfer – two areas that are becoming increasingly important in opening up and operating mines in Canada today.



## NET EARNINGS (LOSSES) OF CREECO HISTORY [2006-2015]







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## Eeyou Power

Eeyou Power is the vehicle by which the Cree will become part of the electricity power generation market. CreeCo and the communities of Eastmain, Nemaska, Oujé-Bougoumou, Waskaganish, Waswanipi and Whapmagoostui created Eeyou Power. To date they have signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Brookfield Renewable Energy Group but have no completed projects.

The potential opportunities are interesting. Eeyou Power is looking at 115MW and 400MW wind and 10MW small hydro projects. If realized they would be worth \$1.5 billion and create 300 jobs lasting four years. The cost of producing this

energy would be under \$0.10/kWh.

Current projects in initial stages include Lake Chibougamau Wind, Gorge de Basil Small Hydro and Nemaska Wind. Projects are currently under a review process and Hydro-Québec has confirmed they have the capacity to handle the energy output. Both the Quebec Energy Policy and the Hydro-Québec Strategic Plan favour these types of projects.

Despite reluctance to promote this industry by the current provincial Liberal government, President Josie Jimikin said they are continuing to lobby for support in Quebec City.

## The Board of Compensation

The Board of Compensation was part of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement that would receive, administer, use and invest the compensation monies given to the Cree under the JBNQA. The BOC has 21 members composed of two elected members from each community and three appointed by the Cree Nation Government. All elected members serve for four years and must be a JBNQA beneficiary of 18 years or older.

Most bands look at the Community Fund, which will disburse \$2 million this year. Small communities will see 5% divided among them. Overall, 95% of the money will go to all communities on a per capita basis. For small

communities, this is in addition to their portion of the initial 5%.

Lesser known is the Economic Development Fund. This year will see \$444,444 given to each community. Another \$444,444 is given to CreeCo for a Venture Capital Fund to assist Cree entrepreneurs.

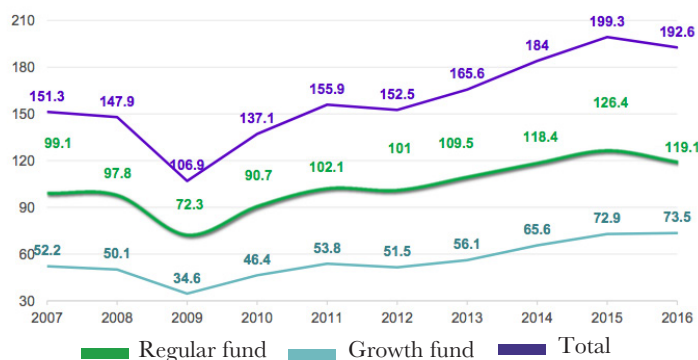
Then there's the Administration Fund for "requests made by Crees or on behalf of Crees," of which \$1.05 million is budgeted for 2016-17. Lots of work is required to access these funds.

Between 1989 and 2003, the Cree Rights Fund supplied \$11.5 million to the CRA/GCCEI to defend Cree rights and way of life.



Millions of \$

### MARKET VALUE OF THE INVESTMENTS HISTORY [2006-2015]



## Summary

Current portfolio value: **\$311.2M**

Past distributions (in 2016 dollars): **\$278.2M**

Total portfolio value plus distributions: **\$589.4M**

Less compensation received (in 2016 dollars): **-\$361.4M**

Additional value created between

1978 and 2016: **\$228.0M**





Various Earthships completed across the world; Bottom-right, Michael Reynolds, creator of the Earthship initiative





## Could **Earthships** solve housing crises in First Nations?

Photos by Kirsten Jacobsen & Sylvia Nowak

# SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS

by Dan Isaac



An “Earthship” is currently being constructed on the Six Nations Reserve for a community member living in a crowded, rundown trailer. Fran “Flower” Doxtador has been on the Ontario reserve’s wait list for housing for over a decade, a reality faced by many Indigenous people.

By the end of July, however, she’ll be living in an Earthship – an off-grid, “radically sustainable” form of housing partially made from recycled materials such as bottles and tires. An Earthship generates its own electricity through wind and solar, catches rain or snow for potable water, and treats sewage onsite. Heating and cooling are provided by natural solar and thermal dynamics, which also allows occupants to grow their own food, according to Earthship creator Michael Reynolds.

The housing units do this “using the biology and physics of the planet, which is what Indigenous people have always done,” Reynolds said.

The concept is being touted as a solution to chronic housing woes faced by First Nations communities. According to a study by the Assembly of First Nations, 94% of them have housing waiting lists. The same study also found that 37% of households require major repairs, 23% of adults live in overcrowded situations, and nearly 32% of households don’t have safe drinking water. Meanwhile, 10% have no electricity, and 31% have unsatisfactory heating systems.

But it takes a community to build one. There are 70 people – many from outside Canada – working on Flower’s Earthship,







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On behalf of the Board members and staff of the  
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“It’s really important for this to happen all over the world... **We’re trying to level the playing field.** We want to make the knowledge of how to **create sustainable housing available for everybody.**”



Community members and international volunteers working on Fran Doxtador’s Earthship in Six Nations.



said Reynolds. “We’re creating a situation that brings people together,” he noted. “They’re certainly not all being paid. In fact, many of them are paying to be here.”

Students of the Earthship organization pay tuition of \$1000 to get hands-on training.

“It’s a global community that has come together to help,” said Flower. “I see the people in the community coming together too. It’s given me faith, it’s showed me that there are people who care.”

Of the 10 from Six Nations, most are youth. The goal is to provide them with hands-on experience and have them pay it forward. “It’s just something humanity needs. People need food, water and shelter,” said Reynolds. “They’re simple to build and it puts housing back into the hands of the people.”

“This experience will certainly be a seed of change for our community,” said organizer Terrylynn Brant, who helped fundraise for the project. “I believe some of the youth on the build will move forward in creating housing that speaks to our responsibilities.”

The price tag is comparable to conventional housing. The community and Earthship Organization raised \$70,000 to build Flower’s home, much of which goes to transportation, labour and accommodation for the crew.

According to Reynolds, an Earthship can be built in 14 days – when it’s done correctly. At the time of the interview, Reynolds and Flower were in the process of putting the roof on the new home. The coming days were to be dedicated to the interior of the ship.

Flower was on the verge of tears. “I can’t seem to describe how I’m feeling,” she said. “It seems like ‘thankful’ and ‘grateful’ aren’t enough.”

The Nation will check in to see how Flower’s Earthship holds up in the severe Ontario winter. For now, she’s proud of her new home: “Mother Earth is kind. I want to save a little bit of her for the generations still to come.”



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Photos provided Saige and Natasia Mukash; Photo below by Catherine Orr



# FULL CIRCLE

by Dan Isaac

A recent art exhibit in Quebec's Eastern Townships featured a mother-daughter duo from Whapmagoostui. Natasia and Saige Mukash stole the show during the month-long "Aboriginal Women's Art: A Celebration" event at Studio Georgeville.

While the two have similar upbringings, their artwork is worlds apart. Natasia Mukash, inspired by traditional art forms, paints in oil; her daughter Saige draws in ink.

"I was inspired by illustrations in books," said Saige. "I would collect books just for the illustrations. My artwork isn't considered Native, it's



# Whapmagoostui artists draw attention at Aboriginal arts exhibition



more surreal and I base a lot of it on my dreams.”

Natasia, 37, is a veteran of shows like this, but this is 19-year-old Saige’s first exhibit outside Whapmagoostui.

Natasia remembers her first art show as a young woman, accompanied by her infant daughter. “I brought her with me and we painted onsite. It was the first time I’d painted in front of people because I was so shy. But after that show I was hooked. I participated in every art show I could,” she said.

Her own mother, an art teacher, sparked Natasia’s early creativity. It’s an experience she passed on to her offspring. “All four of my children are artists and musicians,” she boasted.

“I remember being small and she would bring me into her studio,” recalled Saige. “My mother was my inspiration.”

In some ways she feels typecast, however.

“When I say I’m an Aboriginal artist and then people look at my work, it’s not what they’re expecting,” said Saige. “They’re expecting animals and teepees and I don’t do that. When big corporations ask for artwork, they kind of want things that can be tokenizing.”

Recently, she’s decided to incorporate some traditional elements and stories into her work while maintaining her individuality, “I’ve been working on

a series of traditional pieces, but I made them in my own style,” said Saige.

It’s not easy being an artist in Great Whale. “It was difficult to get art supplies as a child,” explained Natasia. “Some companies try to charge ridiculous fees to ship art supplies up north.”

But there’s certainly no lack of artistic ability in the community. “I’ve seen so much talent in the youth in writing, painting and dancing,” said Natasia. “I feel sad because there are only certain outlets for them.”

Though it’s tough at times, for Saige and Natasia the choice to be a career artist is one neither regrets.





ΔΕΥΤ. CAVAC ΔΕΥΤ. ΔΕΥΤ.

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“Art helps me express myself. I can’t imagine myself without it,” said Saige.

“I was really little and I knew I would be an artist, that this was going to be a life-long dream. This is the dream job for me,” said Natasia.

Though it's just the beginning for Saige, there's a feeling of things coming full circle. "It was amazing that we had our first art show together, since I brought her to my first art show over 18 years ago when she was just a baby," said Natasia. "A lot of artists up north don't think they can do this full time, and I think that my family is proof that, yes, you can do it full time. You can survive off your dreams. By some miracle, everything always works out."





*Wendigo* is part of a series of work by Saige Mukash where she portrays traditional spirits in contemporary style



WENDIGO

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Photo credit: **Hossein Taheri**



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# Grooming the future



## Wabun Youth Gathering changing lives

by Xavier Kataquapit

**T**he Wabun Youth Gathering celebrated its 10th year in the wilderness lakeside resort setting of Horwood Lake Lodge, west of Timmins, July 11-22.

Divided into two parts – the first week for youth aged eight to 12 and the second week for youth aged 13 to 18 – the event featured a series of workshops and teachings on traditional knowledge and culture by facilitator Ron Kanutski, a social worker and cultural teacher from Lake Helen First Nation in northwestern Ontario. Well-known as a stand-up comic and performer, Kanutski led group sessions that included play activities for younger participants and more in-depth teaching sessions for older youth.

“One of the most important lessons I learned from my Elders is that we should spend more time playing

and having fun with our youth. In all my lessons, I include plenty of laughter and joy because not only is it more fun to learn that way, it is more memorable for those I teach,” explained Kanutski.

The Timmins Fur Council held special activities for both groups, including a presentation on trapping culture and animal hides. During the first week, Tim Simpson of Pro Sports Management in Timmins led junior youth in bubble soccer and in the second week, archery tag was organized for the senior youth.

Although hampered by rain showers, participants still managed to enjoy both activities. On the last evening of each week before everyone returned home, a social gathering was managed by DJs Peter Lawryniw and Kevin Martel of DJTAZ of Timmins.

More than 60 youth attended the event, which was sponsored by Wabun Tribal Council Health Services based in Timmins, with support from Goldcorp Inc and Kunuwanimano Child and Family Services. Faye Naveau, Regional Crisis Coordinator for Wabun Health Services, coordinated the event.

“There were very few distractions here in the middle of this beautiful wilderness setting with eagles, loons and all types of wildlife nearby,” said Naveau. “I am thankful for the support of our Wabun chiefs, Wabun executive, our Health Director Jean Lemieux and chaperones for making sure our young people are being helped along a good trail so that they will have better lives.”

“This event was made possible through the vision and dream of our Elder Thomas Saunders of Brunswick House First Nation,” said Jean Lemieux. “Although he passed on before this dream could be made a reality, it was always his wish to see our people, especially our youth, come together in a gathering such as this.

Jacy Jolivet, a 13-year-old member of Brunswick House, has attended the annual event for several years and graduated from the junior camp to the senior camp this year. He said the gathering has become a highlight of his summer.

“I had lots of fun this year as we got to go out on the water, to go fishing and swimming. I also get to see people I’ve met from other communities over the years and that is always rewarding. I always learn something new here and it helps me to have a better life,” said Jolivet.

Horwood Lake Lodge owners Mike and Jaana Brazeau along with their staff provided accommodations for the Wabun youth. Fishing and pontoon boats were made available to allow youth to experience fishing and trips out onto the expansive lake. The lodge through Albert’s Sports and Workwear in Timmins provided a fishing tackle kit and rod for each youth.





## EXECUTIVE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Eskan Company is the economic development corporation of the Cree Nation of Mistissini and is seeking to fill two key management positions.

### Chief Operations Officer (COO)

Under the direction of the President and working closely with the CFO, the COO will assume responsibility for the overall planning, organization, management, budgeting and operational control of Eskan and its subsidiaries.

This is a position of significant responsibility in delivering high quality services to customers, while providing strategic leadership and support for the Board of Directors in furthering the economic vision of the Cree Nation of Mistissini.

The position will be of interest to accomplished administrative leaders with 5 years' experience and a Bachelor's Degree or college diploma in a management or business discipline, combined with a strong work ethic and high level of integrity and accountability.

Critical competencies for success in this role include teamwork, negotiation skills, strategic thinking, leadership, financial skills, performance management and fluency in English. Knowledge of French and Cree are strong assets.

### Chief Financial Officer (CFO)

Under the direction of the President and working closely with the COO, the CFO will assume responsibility for financial management and reporting, risk management and controls for Eskan and its subsidiaries.

This is a position of significant responsibility in meeting the financial and legal requirements for the company.

The position will be of interest to accomplished financial leaders with 5 years' experience and a University degree in accounting or finance, combined with a strong work ethic, attention to detail, and high level of integrity and accountability.

Critical competencies for success in this role include teamwork, financial skills, analytical thinking, business planning, software proficiency including ACCPAC and Microsoft Office, and fluency in English. Knowledge of French and Cree are strong assets.

Salary, benefits and performance incentives are commensurate with the level of responsibility.

Full position descriptions are available at [www.pmcrenewal/news](http://www.pmcrenewal/news)

Interested candidates should forward their résumés to Robert Jimikin, President, ESKAN COMPANY, 187 Main Street, Mistissini, QC, G0W 1C0. Include a letter written in English outlining your motivation for seeking the position and commenting on the particular strengths that you feel you can bring to the role.

Informal, confidential enquiries may be made by contacting Rodney W. Hester at [rwhester@pmcrenewal.com](mailto:rwhester@pmcrenewal.com) or call (613) 222-8527.





# Beyond ᐃᓄᐃ Indian Act

by Dan Isaac

The AFN's annual assembly underlined a change in **nation-to-nation relationships**



Photos provided by the AFN

**T**he tone at this year's annual general assembly of the Assembly of First Nations, with the theme of "Gaining Momentum," expressed the improving relationship between Indigenous nations, the AFN and the new Liberal government elected last fall.

Held in Niagara Falls July 12-14, this transformation could be felt at the assembly. Gone was the frustration and bickering between the chiefs and the AFN executive, replaced instead by a genuine sense of hope and a dialogue centered on defining nation-to-nation relationships. How to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples was another focus.

Philip Awashish, one the principal negotiators of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement, made a presentation on "Moving Beyond the Indian Act," the story of how the Eeyou of Eeyou Istchee went from "6000 Cree living in six crude communities without electricity, suitable water and sewage systems and adequate housing" to a nation composed of nine Cree bands that has "freed itself from the bonds and chains of the Indian Act for a period of 32 years."

In his speech, Awashish recounted "the decision to kill and bury the Indian Act," the "just-do-it approach" that enabled them to form the Grand Council of the Crees without approval from non-Aboriginal governments or funding.

"In a good way, Phillip Awashish schooled us on the Cree's lived experience in burying the Indian Act and doing the hard work of nation building for the Eeyou of Eeyou Istchee," said National Chief Perry Bellegarde following the speech.

One of Awashish's closing remarks was: "I am sometimes asked, 'Where are the youth in your story?' I say, 'We were the youth.'"

The youth of this year's AGA were also leaders. They too felt the shift in the atmosphere.

"Cabinet ministers are here and engaging, the change is tangible," said AFN Youth Council member Deanna Pashe. "We no longer have to go to them and beg them to listen, they're coming to us and asking for our input. It's now up to us to engage in the dialogue around climate change – we need to work together to create a holistic strategy that comes from the land."







During a roundtable discussion with Environment Minister Catherine McKenna, Pashe presented a prophecy that comes from both of her nations – the Dakota and Odawa. “If we don’t take care for the land, Mother Earth will clean itself.”

McKenna was receptive, a big change from her predecessor. “The previous minister would have thought I was crazy for presenting that prophecy,” she joked.

But it was the Elders who best illustrated this shift. “I’ve been through the worst of it all,” said Robert Joseph,

However, for some regional chiefs, this shift wasn’t anything to celebrate. “In light of the new government, and what I would call the new vision, we have to place the bar a little higher. The nation-to-nation relationship is now the floor. Ultimately, the goal we’re seeking are Indigenous institutions that are under our control,” said Quebec and Labrador Regional Chief Ghislain Picard.

Ontario Regional Chief Isadore Day said that a new way forward comes with responsibility. “The nation-to-nation dialogue, and reconciliation are issues that we need get right the first time,” he argued. “As we gain momentum, we can’t forget there’s due diligence and processes that have to be done to get us there.”

There was a record 70 resolutions passed during the AGA. Many focused on nation building, the UN Declaration, reconciliation and nation-to-nation relationships. Others reminded participants of the harsh inequities faced by Indigenous people in this country.

Though the AGA was about gaining momentum, the weeks that followed have seen backpedaling on the part of the federal government. It now appears the Trudeau government is trying to lower expectations in regard to adoption of the UN Declaration.

“I’ve been in the deepest darkest holes you’ve ever seen, and there’s no victory in that”

a Hereditary Chief of the Gwawaenuk First Nation in BC. “I’ve been in the deepest, darkest holes you’ve ever seen, and there’s no victory in that.”

Chief Joseph is a residential school survivor, a recent recipient of the Indspire Lifetime Achievement Award. “Reconciliation means a million things,” he said. “Everyone is interested in this new way forward, but no one knows what that looks like yet, so we have to put it to paper.”

One thing is certain, however: “We have to start doing things differently.”

The hesitation demonstrates that progress comes as it always has – as a fight to have Indigenous rights recognized in Canadian law. But it’s equally important to remember that the Harper government wouldn’t have dreamed of offering the AFN a seat at the table. And that, if nothing else, is progress.

“Back in the day, we had all the same meetings, but we didn’t have any dialogue aimed at transforming our relationship. We’d do and say the same things, but would go back to hating each other afterwards. We need to make sure that, with what we’re doing now, we don’t go back to square one,” said Chief Joseph.





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## Under the Northern Sky Remembering a mother

by Xavier Kataquapit



I lost my mother Susan Kataquapit recently as she passed from this world on July 23 at the age of 73. My brothers and sisters, her many grandchildren and great grandchildren are also feeling the loss of our matriarch and our connection to our traditional past.

My mother, Susan Kataquapit, passed from this world on July 23 at the age of 73. My brothers and sisters, her many grandchildren and great-grandchildren are feeling the loss of our matriarch and the connection to our traditional past.

She was one of the last of a generation of Attawapiskat Elders born and raised on the traditional Mushkego lands 100 kilometres north of the modern community on the James Bay coast. During a visit 20 years ago, our grandmother Louise Paulmartin pointed out where all her children were born near the mouth of the river. She explained that it was the Paulmartin women and an extended distant family of mothers and aunts who acted as midwives in the wilderness to bring my mother Susan into this world on March 11, 1943.

She was born into a hardworking family of hunters and trappers. The Paulmartin men were well known for their skill in living off the land. Equally hard working, the women maintained the close-knit family bond that helped ensure their survival in the wilderness.

Mom often told stories of her early life. Her chores included fetching fresh water in a canoe with her sisters, and tending to the fishing nets. In the winters, she snow-shoed or dog-sledded far into the wilderness with her family to gather wood, tend to traps and collect snow for drinking water. At times the family would travel 30 kilometres to the nearest Hudson Bay

trading post at Lakitusaki, or as it is known in English, Lake River.

Mom had an adventurous family life. They hunted, fished and trapped in the winters and travelled south every spring to spend their summers on the shores of the Attawapiskat River. She could maintain a wilderness camp and keep her family warm and safe from the elements.

When mom needed to find a life partner, Marius Kataquapit entered the story. Dad was born and raised on the Attawapiskat River, and was considered an adventurous boy who had left to work in the southern world at only 16 years of age.

When he returned to woo our mother, the Paulmartin clan were reluctant to support the pairing. However, this upstart young Marius persisted and worked hard for her affection and the support of her family. He finally got his wish.

After the marriage they lived in Moosonee, where dad could find steady work. Life in the railhead town, where the modern met the traditional, was not easy in the 1960s. The young couple returned home in



## Regional Radio Show on Housing

from the Capital Works and Services Department / Housing and ownership in the Cree Nation

**Wednesday August 17, 2016 from 12:15 to 12:45**



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**Lawrence P. Katapatuk**  
*Regional Housing Planner*

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every third Wednesday of every month

*We need community members' input, suggestions  
and comments concerning housing in the Cree Nation.*



the early 1970s to raise their children close to their extended families.

Dad left us often to do the heavy tasks of hunting and trapping but he always reminded us he did so knowing that his family was well cared for by an intelligent, strong and capable mother. She kept us healthy and safe while teaching us to be hard working and kind. We marvel now at how she was able to do it. There was no running water back then; maintaining a household with nine children without sinks, showers or toilets was not an easy task.

Mom still made time work as a cook at the local hospital to help support her large family. In her spare time she sewed, stitched and beaded decorative moose hide mitts, gloves, hats and coats to sell.

As our teacher, she guided us in her own quiet way and preferred to lead by example. Even as she grew old with debilitating arthritis, she constantly struggled through it to help her children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren. As she worked to make our lives comfortable, we learned from her that, with effort, anything was possible.

In the early 1980s, she suffered her first major loss when her father Xavier Paulmartin died of a stroke. But with a growing circle of young children, it was

easier to heal the pain. The only time I ever really witnessed mom falter was when she lost her 16-year-old son, my brother Philip, on a tragic Christmas night. Years later, she again felt this pain with the loss of her wonderful little grandson, Nicolas.

Even with all the pain she must have carried in her heart and in her body, mom was a powerful spirit. With all the turmoil and hardship we faced, she was always the foundation that we could count on. I feel her still in my heart, my memories and my thoughts.

I will always feel guilty for not spending more time with mom and dad. Yet, I realize she was proud and happy for me, my brothers Lawrence, Mario, Anthony, Philip, Joseph and Paul. My sisters Janie and Jackie were more than daughters – they were also her best friends.

Her spirit now roams the land where she was born and raised. On those distant shores, she has regained her strong, young body. She is able to run again across the flat tundra of the Nawashi River where her parents and her ancestral Paulmartin clan wait for her. Her husband Marius is there too, ready to make her laugh. In her renewed strength, she is able to hold on to her son Philip once again and take her grandson Nicolas into her arms.



THE CREE MINERAL  
EXPLORATION  
BOARD



CONSEIL CRI SUR  
L'EXPLORATION  
MINÉRALE



**General prize category:**

<b>1st prize</b>	<b>2nd prize</b>	<b>3rd prize</b>
<b>\$1,500</b>	<b>\$1,000</b>	<b>\$500</b>

**Prospectors category:**

**One prize of**  
**\$2,000**

**The Cree Mineral Exploration Board's Rock Competition to reward new mineral discoveries in Eeyou Istchee**

<p><b>Requirements:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New discovery</li> <li>• Sample must be the size of a fist</li> <li>• Sample must be located on a map</li> <li>• Complete the application form</li> </ul>	<p><b>Deadline and shipping:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CMEB assumes the analysis expenses of the participating samples</li> <li>• The contest ends on October 31</li> <li>• Shipping is at participant's expense</li> </ul>	<p><b>Don't forget:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hints on the ground: look for rusty surfaces</li> <li>• Hints after breaking: sample metallic minerals</li> </ul>
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NAME \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

COMMUNITY \_\_\_\_\_

SAMPLE COLLECTED FROM

☐ Shore Line    ☐ Island    ☐ Stream Bank    ☐ River Bank  
☐ Lake Side    ☐ Mountain    ☐ Other

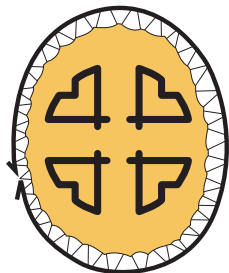
SAMPLE LOCATION PLACE NAME \_\_\_\_\_

MAP \_\_\_\_\_

GPS COORDINATES \_\_\_\_\_ E \_\_\_\_\_ N

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

**Coordinates:** 16 Beaver Road, Box 210, Wemindji, QC, Canada J0M 1L0  
 Tel: 819-978-0264 ext. 327 Fax: 819-978-3834 E-mail: youcefbarbi@cree.net.com



Conseil Cri de la santé et des services sociaux de la Baie James  
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Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay

# YOUR COMMUNITY, **YOUR** ✓ **OTE**



The Cree Health Board will be holding elections for the CHB Chairperson on **September 6th 2016.**

*Nominations will be open between August 7th to 22nd*

For more information, please contact

**Kenny Loon** : *Chief Returning Officer*

Email: [kennl@rogers.com](mailto:kennl@rogers.com)

Phone: **(613) 314-0553**





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